

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 TEL AVIV 10518

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, MARR, LE, IS, US
SUBJECT: ISRAEL AND THE LEBANESE ENCLAVES: SYMBIOSIS
AND SYMBOLISM

REF: TEL AVIV 10254, TEL AVIV 10332

SUMMARY: MEETINGS WITH GOI AND IDF LEADERS OVER THE PAST
SEVERAL WEEKS HAVE LED US TO CONCLUDE THAT: (A) THE GOI
EXERCISES CONSIDERABLE, BUT NOT TOTAL, SHORT-TERM CONTROL
OVER THE MILITIAS AND THE ENCLAVE COMMANDERS IN SOUTHERN
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LEBANON; (B) THE ENCLAVE COMMANDERS DO NOT THEMSELVES
HAVE TOTAL CONTROL OVER THEIR FIGHTERS; (C) HADDAD IS A
SYMBOL TO BOTH THE ENCLAVES AND THE ISRAELIS AND NEITHER
WILL WISH HIM TO LEAVE; (D) HADDAD, THE ENCLAVE BUFFER
AREA, AND THE GOOD FENCE ARE INTERRELATED AND FORM THE
BASIS FOR GOI POLICY DECISIONS CONCERNING SOUTH LEBANON.
THEY CANNOT BE SEPARATED. ALL ARE CENTRAL TO GOI DECISION-

MAKING RE SOUTH LEBANON AND ALL, IF ISRAEL HAS ITS WAY,
WILL STAY IN PLACE UNTIL REPLACED BY SOMEONE OR SOMETHING
EQUALLY SATISFACTORY. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING HIS AUGUST 10 MEETING WITH IDF CHIEF OF
STAFF EITAN AND DMI GAZIT, ARMA COL. WILLIAMS ASKED FOR
A REVIEW OF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN THE ENCLAVES IN
SOUTHERN LEBANON - WHO COMMANDS WHAT, THE DEGREE OF IDF
INFLUENCE AND CONTROL, AND THE NUMBER OF MILITARY GROUPS
IN PLACE. EITAN AND GAZIT SAID THE FOLLOWING:

A. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIX HOW MANY "GROUPS"
THERE ARE IN THE AREA, BUT GAZIT SAID THERE COULD
BE AS MANY AS TWENTY. GAZIT INSISTED THESE POLITICAL
ORGANIZATIONS ARE HIGHLY EPHEMERAL AND HAVE LITTLE MILITARY
SIGNIFICANCE.

B. THE ACTUAL MILITARY ORGANIZATION ON THE GORUND
IS BASED UPON THE THREE ENCLAVES, TWO CHRISTIAN AND ONE
SHIA. THE CHRISTIAN-DOMINATED WESTERN ENCLAVE EXTENDS
FROM THE SEA EASTWARD TO AY TARUN. IN THE ENCTER, THE
SHIA ENCLAVE EXTENDS NORTH FROM AY TARUN TO APPROXIMATELY
AL UDAYSAH. THE THIRD, CHRISTIAN, RUNS FROM AL UDAYSAH
NORTH AND HAS MARJ UYUN AS ITS CAPITAL.

C. ALL THE ENCLAVES ARE UNDER ARMS AND HAVE
MILITARY COMMANDERS, BUT THE FORCES ARE JUST "COLLECTIONS
OF INDEPENDENT GUERRILLAS." BOTH GAZIT AND EITAN SAID
THAT THE FIGHTERS OBEY THEIR COMMANDERS ONLY AS LONG AS
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THEY BELIEVE THE ORDER CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR AND THEIR
VILLAGE'S SECURITY. IF AN ORDER DOES NOT MEET THIS
CRITERION, IT IS NOT OBEYED.

D. THE ESTIMATED 3,000 FIGHTERS IN THE MARJ UYUN AND SHIA
ENCLAVES ARE UNDER THE UNIFIED COMMAND OF MAJOR HADDAD. HADDAD'S
POLITICAL ALLEGIANCE IN THE NORTH IS TO THE CHAMOUNISTS.
THE WESTERN-MOST ENCLAVE IS CURRENTLY COMMANDED BY CAPTIAN
GEORGE ZAATER, AN AIR FORCE PILOT ASSOCIATED (LIKE MAJOR
SHIDIAK, THE PREVIOUS ENCLAVE COMMANDER NOW REPORTED SICK
AND IN THE HOSPITAL), WITH THE PHALANGISTS IN BEIRUT.

2. SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE MEETING, WILLIAMS ASKED ABOUT
THE DEGREE OF IDF CONTROL OVER THE MILITIAS AND THE COMMANDERS.
EITAN REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THE IDF ONLY HAS LIMITED
CONTROL OVER THE COMMANDERS IN THE AREA. HE ALSO SAID HADDAD
IS NOT TRUSTWORTHY, OFTEN BREAKING A PROMISE TO THE IDF AND
LATER BLAMING ANY RESULTANT INCIDENT ON "CRAZIES OVER WHOM
I HAVE NO CONTROL." EITAN ALSO CLAIMED TO BE
CONVINCED THAT ZAATER
IS RECEIVING ORDERS FROM PHLANGISTS IN BEIRUT TO OPPOSE
THE MOVEMENT OF THE LEBANESE BATTALION INTO TIBNIN.
THIS GREATLY COMPLICATES IDF ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL

HIS ACTIVITIES.

3. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT HADDAD SHARES EITAN'S (AND OTHER TOP ECHELON IDF OFFICERS') DISDAIN FOR THE UN, PARTICULARLY THE LEADERSHIP; SHIDIAK AND ZAATER PRESUMABLY HOLD THE SAME VIEW. REMARKS MADE BY UNIFIL'S SPOKESMAN TO THE EFFECT THAT STRAY MORTAR ROUNDS, CLAIMED BY HADDAD TO HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AT THE LAF BATTALION AT KAWKABA, WERE IN FACT DELIBERATELY FIRED AT UNIFIL HAVE NOT HELPED TO MAKE HADDAD MORE COOPERATIVE.

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4. COMMENT: AN OMNIPRESENT QUESTION OVER THESE PAST WEEKS IS THE DEGREE OF ACTUAL CONTROL OVER THE MILITIAS AND THE ENCLAVE COMMANDERS EXERCISED BY THE IDF. SOME, INCLUDING THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, ASSUME THAT THE IDF EXERCISES TOTAL CONTROL OVER THE CHRISTIANS IN THE SOUTH AND THUS ANY INCIDENT WHICH OCCURS COULD AT BEST HAVE BEEN PREVENTED BY THE GOI AND, AT WORST, IS GOI-INSPIRED.

WE HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THIS QUESTION AND HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE GOI, THROUGH THE IDF, DOES EXERCISE CONSIDERABLE CONTROL AND INFLUENCE OVER THE ACTIVITIES OF BOTH THE MILITIA GROUPS AND THEIR COMMANDERS - BUT ONLY UP TO A SECRET

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POINT. INCIDENTS WHICH OCCUR AS A RESULT OF MILITIA OR COMMANDER INITIATIVE BEYOND THAT POINT WHERE GOI CONTROL AND INFLUENCE STOPS COULD BE CRITICAL AS THEY EFFECT THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

5. THIS CONCLUSION IS BASED UPON SEVERAL FACTORS: (A) STATEMENTS MADE BY THE ISRAELIS, SUCH AS THOSE REPORTED IN REFTELS. WE ARE WELL AWARE THAT IT IS IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST TO TELL US THIS AND PERHAPS THE ACTUAL POINT OF LOSS OF CONTROL IS CLOSER TO THE END OF THE SPECTRUM THAT THE GOI INSISTS; NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT WHAT ISRAELIS TELL US. IN THE LONG RUN, THE GOI DOES CONTROL TOTALLY THE SURVIVAL OF THE ENCLAVES, JUST BECAUSE IT SUPPLIES THE WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT CONSIDER THIS TO BE OVERRIDING BECAUSE THE MILITIAS HAVE ENOUGH OF EVERYTHING NOW ON HAND TO COMPLETELY DEFY GOL EFFORTS TO MOVE SOUTH IF THEY SO DESIRE. (B) A RELIABLE UN SOURCE WHO KNOWS ALL THE PLAYERS INVOLVED AND THE SITUATION ON THE GORUND IN THE ENCLAVES HAS TOLD US THA THERE IS INDEED A LIMIT TO ISRAELI CONTROL, AND THAT, LIKEWISE, THE ENCLAVE COMMANDERS DO NOT HAVE FULL CONTROL OVER THE MILITIA FIGHTERS. HE ESTIMATED THAT THE FIGHTERS OBEY ORDERS ABOUT 90 PER CENT OF THE TIME. THE REMAINING 10 PER CENT OBVIOUSLY REPRESENT A HIGHLY FLAMMABLE FACTOR, ONE WHICH WOULD AFFECT THE GOI'S ABILITY TO KEEP CHRISTIAN GUNS SILENT AFTER THE LAF GETS TO TIBNIN. (C) ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT SHIDIAK AND ZAATER, WE HAVE BEEN WATCHING HADDAD FOR ABOUT TWO YEARS. WILLIAMS HAS OBSERVED HIM AT METULLA ON SEVARAL OCCASIONS AND BELIEVES, AS DOES OUR UN SOURCE, THAT HADDAD IS THE TRUE MILITARY AND POLITICAL COMMANDER IN THE MARJ UYUN AND CENTRAL ENCLAVES. FURTHER, HE IS A WELL-TRAINED PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER AND SECRET

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IS FIGHTING IN HIS HOME TOWN WHERE HIS FAMILY LIVES. THIS COMBINATION HAS A PROFOUND EFFECT UPON HIM AND UPON HIS DECISIONS. THE INFORMATION WE DO HAVE ON SHADIAK WOULD INDICATE THAT HE IS NOT OF THE SAME CHARACTER AS HADDAD AND IS MORE INTERESTED IN HIMSELF THAN IN THE

CAUSE OF THE ENCLAVES. THE ONLY THING WE HAVE ON ZAATER
IS THAT HE IS "EMOTIONAL."

6. THIS LEADS US TO AN EXAMINATION OF ISRAELI MOTIVES
AND POLICY AS FAR AS THE ENCLAVES AND THE COMMANDERS ARE
CONCERNED. THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE IDF LITANI OPERATION,
WHICH ADVANCED ISRAELI FORCES INSIDE SOUTHERN LEBANON TO
A DEPTH OF ABOUT TEN KILOMETERS, WAS THE ISRAELI VERSION OF
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT; IT DROVE THE
PALESTINIANS FROM THE BORDER AREAS BUT ESTABLISHED AN
ISRAELI SECURITY PRESENCE THERE INSTEAD OF A LEBANESE ONE.
RESOLUTION RWT REQUIRED THAT THIS ISRAELI SECURITY PRESENCE BE
WITHDRAWN AND REPLACED BY UNIFIL, WHICH WOULD PERFORM THE
SECURITY FUNCTION. BECAUSE OF ITS FUNDAMENTAL DISDAIN FOR THE
UN, THE GOI FOUND THIS ARRANGEMENT POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY
INADEQUATE AND DECIDED TO RETAIN PROXY CONTROL OF THE
BORDER REGION.

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7. THIS IS WHAT DELAYED IDF WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON UNTIL JUNE. THE ISRAELIS REQUIRED TIME TO FORM, EQUIP AND TRAIN A NEW SECURITY FORCE BASED UPON HADDAD'S AND SHADIAK'S ALREADY EXISTING FORCES, THE CHRISTIAN AND SHIA INHABITANTS OF THE VILLAGES ALONG THE BORDER, AND SOME CHRISTIANS IMPORTED FROM BEIRUT. THEY CHOSE HADDAD AND SHIDIAC BECAUSE THEY ARE, OR AT LEAST WERE, REGULAR OFFICERS OF THE LEBANESE ARMY WHO PLEDGED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE "TRUE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT" AND WHO STILL RECEIVED THEIR PAY FROM BEIRUT. PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF HIS STRONG STAND (WITH CONSIDERABLE IDF SUPPORT) AGAINST THE

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PALESTINIANS, HADDAD BECAME A SYMBOL OF RESOLVE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AND, IN A RATHER DIFFERENT WAY, IN THE NORTH AS WELL. REALIZING THIS, THE GOI SUPPORTED HIS FORCE WITH WEAPONS, AMMUNITION AND SUPPORTING ARTILLERY FIRE AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS AND PREPARED THEM AS REPLACEMENTS FOR IDF TROOPS IN THE BUFFER ZONE. SINCE THE GOI SIMPLY DID NOT BELIEVE UNIFIL WOULD STAY THE COURSE IN KEEPING THE PALESTINIANS IN CHECK (ALTHOUGH THEY NOW ADMIT UNIFIL IS DOING A GOOD JOB), IT WAS AND IS ESSENTIAL TO THEM THAT HADDAD STAY IN PLACE. WHEN HADDAD HAS ON OCCASION SHOWN SIGNS OF WEAKENING, WE KNOW THE GOI HAS, TO QUOTE WEIZMAN, "PUT OUR HAND ON HIS BACK," IN ORDER TO SHORE HIM UP AND KEEP HIM IN PLACE. WITHOUT HIM ISRAELIS FEAR THE ENCLAVE INHABITANTS WOULD SPLINTER OFF INTO NUMEROUS GROUPS, PERHAPS EVEN FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES AND CERTAINLY WOULD NOT REMAIN A FORCE CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING THE BUFFER.

8. ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL, THE GOI'S MAIN CONCERN IS TO KEEP THE "GOOD FENCE" OPEN AND, INDEED, TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF ACCESS POINTS BETWEEN LEBANON AND ISRAEL. THE GOI AND THE ENTIRE ISRAELI PUBLIC GENUINELY VIEW THE "GOOD FENCE" AS DIRECT EVIDENCE OF THEIR DESIRE TO HAVE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS, BUT THEY ARE CONVINCED THE GOL (OR UNIFIL) WOULD NOT LEAVE THE FENCE OPEN IF IT EXTENDED, BY WHATEVER MEANS, ITS CONTROL TO THE BORDER. SOME DAY IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR THE GOI TO SIT DOWN WITH THE GOL AND NEGOTIATE THE RELATIONSHIP, BUT WHEN THE GOI STANDS UP, IT WILL ONLY BE AFTER IT IS ASSURED THE FENCE WILL STAY "GOOD."

9. THUS, HADDAD HIMSELF IS NOT ONLY AN ISRAELI PUPPET, HE HAS SOME STRINGS IN HIS HAND, TOO, INCLUDING SOME WHICH LEAD TO JERUSALEM. IF HE THREATENS TO QUIT THE

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ENCLAVES, THE ISRAELIS WILL AGREE TO A GOOD DEAL TO KEEP HIM HAPPY. IF HE STAYS, HE WILL HAVE TO DO MUCH OF WHAT ISRAEL REQUIRES, BUT THE GOI WILL BE REQUIRED TO DO MUCH OF WHAT HE WANTS AS WELL. IN SUM, THIS RELATIONSHIP IS MUTUALLY REINFORCING. WE WOULD GUESS THE PARTNERS USUALLY DO NOT DISAGREE. THEY BOTH WANT THE ENCLAVES SAFE AND SOUND. WHEN THEY DO ARGUE, EACH HAS SOME MEANS TO INFLUENCE THE OTHER. NEITHER HAS ABSOLUTE CONTROL. LEWIS

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